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Secretary Gassman Announces Nearly \$17,000 in Youth Apprenticeship Grants for Lakeshore Technical College

Funding this fall will set students on career paths to good paying jobs

Sheboygan – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced \$16,983 in Youth Apprenticeship grants that will let Sheboygan area high school students combine employment and classroom instruction in the coming school year, explore career options, and set a course for jobs with a future, good pay, and benefits.

"The Youth Apprenticeship Program is a critical part of our overall strategy to ensure Wisconsin has a workforce that is second to none," Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said. "Youth apprenticeship is a great way to help our students broaden their horizons. Whether a student is on a college track or plans to head directly to work, youth apprenticeship offers the opportunity to learn hands-on skills in their chosen career path. Students can enter the youth apprenticeship program and develop strong skills which lead to jobs that pay family supporting wages. This is a valuable program that deserves recognition and support."

The \$16,983 in grants will fund local business and education partnerships throughout the region and is administered locally by Lakeshore Technical College. Youth apprenticeship programs in the area include auto technician, drafting and design, finance, health, industrial equipment technician, lodging management, production agriculture, and welding. Over 9,000 statewide students have graduated from the Youth Apprenticeship Program since it began in 1992.

Secretary Gassman announced the grant during a visit to Lakeland Automotive where an Automotive Maintenance Technician (2 year Youth Apprenticeship program) graduate completed their apprenticeship and is now working there. Despite the program's popularity, the Legislature has cut its funding over the last five years from \$3.2 million to \$1.1 million a year.

Compared to the adult apprenticeship program, youth apprenticeship has been in existence a short period. The adult apprenticeship program was the first in the nation, dating back to 1911 when the vocational school system began. Both are administered by the Department of Workforce Development.

Student apprentices work part-time and take related classes in addition to their regular coursework. Program graduates earn a state skill certificate and receive credit at many technical colleges and universities for their program experience. In surveys, apprenticeship graduates say the program gave them a solid head start on their chosen careers while earning money working in their area of interest. Employers like the program because it helps them "grow their own" skilled workforce.

For more information on the program, go to <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dws/programs/ya/> or call (608) 267-7210 for names of local coordinators.

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